

[Ellwood City Ledger](#)

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ELLWOOD CITY - In what U.S. Rep. Jason Altmire called the "end of the beginning" of Ellwood City's comeback, he presented a \$200,000 grant to a local revitalization group on Monday.

As he turned over the giant symbolic check, Altmire, D-4, McCandless Township, credited all of Ellwood City for the work of Ellwood City Revitalization.

"This community has done an unbelievable job," he said.

The \$200,000 federal appropriations grant secured by Altmire will complete the funding for Phase 1 of the revitalization efforts, which will include development of the borough's farmers' market around the Beaver Street parking lot, and a large performance stage and plaza on two lots along the 500 block of Lawrence Avenue.

The performance stage, which can seat between 500 and 2,000 people depending on the configuration, is modeled after a similar stage in Mercer's downtown, which has been credited with drawing people into that business district.

Work on the stage/plaza could begin next month, with the demolition of a former optometrist's office that now occupies half of the targeted space. Construction will begin in the spring and run through summer 2011.

"What Ellwood City is doing, and will continue to do, will be a model for all of western Pennsylvania," Altmire said.

Among the officials on hand for Monday's ceremony were Lawrence County Commissioners

Steve Craig, Richard DeBlasio and Dan Vogler; Ellwood City council members Glenn Jones, Anthony "Lefty" DeCarbo and Marilyn Mancini; and Mayor Anthony Court.

State Rep. Jaret Gibbons, D-10, Franklin Township, who also attended the event, said the federal funding highlighted Monday by Altmire can be used to leverage additional state funds totaling between \$500,000 and \$1 million.